



सत्यमव जयते

NEWSLETTER



THE NATIONAL LIBRARY
KOLKATA

2002

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1st Cover page

❖ A view of the main building of the National Library



3rd Cover page

❖ A view of the Remtek Monastery in Gangtok, Sikkim,
Programme 'Infrastructural Development of libraries of
North East'

Inauguration of Workshop on D B Act, at Bangalore

4th Cover page

❖ Exhibition of Sanskrit manuscripts in the Rare Books Division,
the National Library on the Sanskrit Day

❖ Officials from the National Library and Central Reference
Library at the Inauguration of Workshop at Thanjavur,
Chennai

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PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

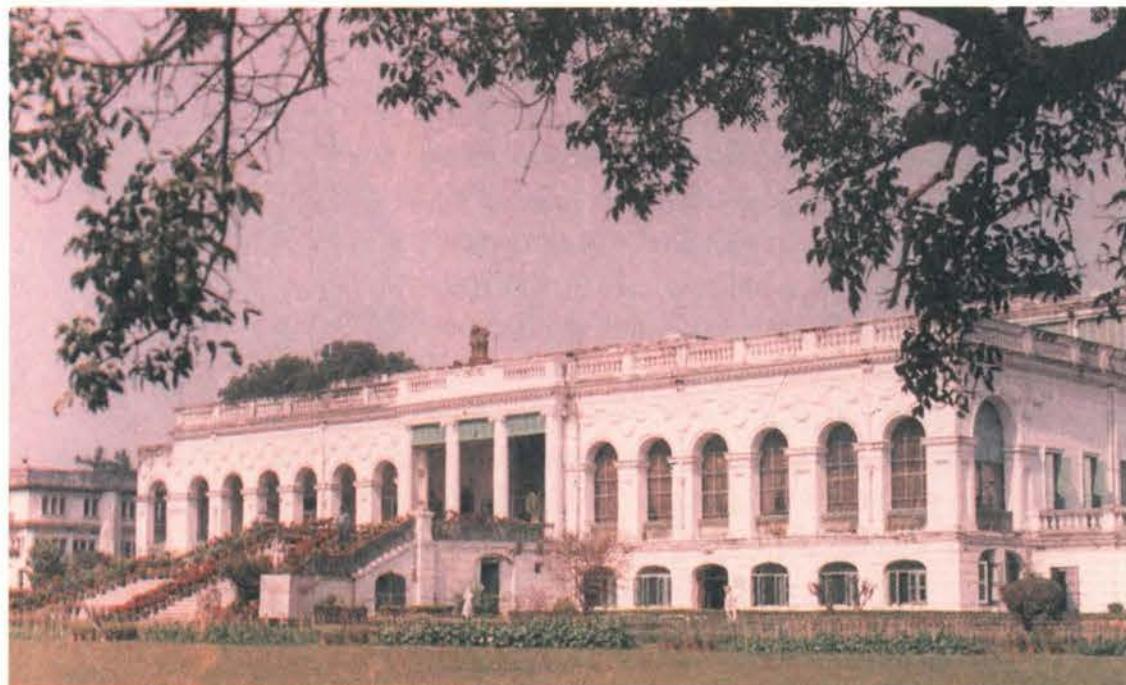
In these days of environmental pollution and other climatic hazards the biggest problem that the libraries face is conservation of reading materials which are purchased and procured through various channels of acquisition. The National Library which is fulfilling the objective of acquiring and conserving the reading materials for posterity and also acting as a referral centre for any publication produced in the country, has been struggling since the era of Imperial Library with the problems of conservation of its old and valuable collections.

In this issue of the *Newsletter* we have tried to present a clear account of the management and development of the conservation activities that have been practiced by the organization over the time in order to protect the rich cultural heritage of the nation.

The *Newsletter* may share in informing library personnel about the ways in which the experiences and services of the National Library at Kolkata can be utilized to preserve the collection of their libraries.

In addition to the said article the issue throws light upon the National Library's activities, including campaign of the Delivery of Book (Public Libraries) Act, 1954, which was carried out all over the country to make publishers and authors aware of the importance of depositing copies of their publication to the National Library under the said Act, not only for the purpose of research, but for maintaining a record of intellectual endeavors of a civilization and for inculcating the spirit of learning into the coming generations.

3. The National Library period



The National Library in the Viceregal Palace at Belvedere, Alipore, Calcutta

B S Kesavan, who became the first Librarian of the National Library of India, contributed immensely in building the National Library. Not only did B S Kesavan convince the authority that the Viceregal Palace be allotted to the National Library in 1948, but he also undertook the work of remodeling this palatial building to suit the Library requirements. Under his able leadership the Library was shifted from Esplanade East, the city centre to the new premises at Belvedere without suspension of readers services in all the four years from 1948 to 1952.

Among several activities, B S Kesavan took keen interest in developing a Preservation unit in the Library. In 1951, when attempts to bind books by private contractors did not satisfy the Library requirements and binding arrears accumulated to an unallowable large extent, the whole business of binding was investigated.

In 1954, Shri B. B. Chaudhury, then a Technical Assistant, was sent to the National Archives of India, New Delhi, for getting trained in preservation.

Under the supervision of Shri Chaudhury a modest Preparatory unit, Mending unit and Binding unit was developed. The idea was that the rare books and manuscripts could not be put at the mercy of the contractors, therefore, the suggestion of the Librarian to set up a home bindery in the Library premises was accepted by the Governing Council and during 1957-58 five binders, four gold finishers and a Foreman were appointed. Later four more binders were appointed.

A small preservation unit slowly grew where regular binding work and the binding of the Parliamentary papers ran parallel.

31. Preservation Division

After the visit to the National Library by Mr. John Alden, the Book Preservation Expert from USA, and the return of Shri B B Chaudhury, then a senior officer who was deputed to study Book Preservation abroad, a full-fledged Book Preservation Division was set up in the National Library in September 1959. The principal responsibility of the Division was to bind and preserve books that were damaged due to excessive use, improper handling or were mutilated by readers.



Bindery in the National Library

Later the Division started repairing by re-stitching, mending, laminating and providing good binding to the new publications of the Library.

Another responsibility of the Division was to advise libraries and institutions on the care and maintenance of book material.

32. Chemical Laboratory Division

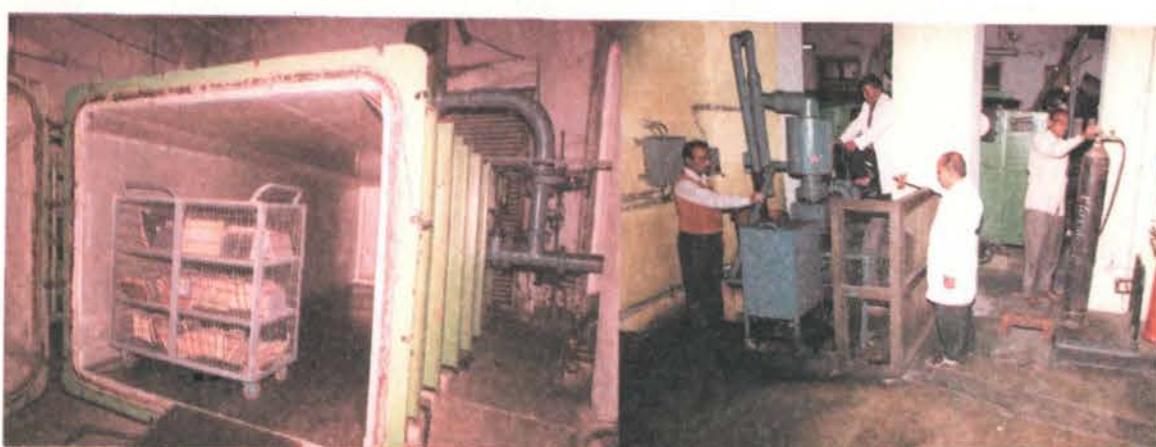
With the growth of the Library, the problems in preservation of huge volumes of publications multiplied. The new age necessitated establishment of a Chemical Laboratory wherein publications could be treated by removing acidity from paper, removing stains, restoring leather-used-binding and so on. For the purpose a Chemist was recruited. In 1967 the Chemical Laboratory received a separate identity as another unit of Preservation Division.

This Division developed its activities on scientific lines and now it shoulders the prime responsibility of conserving the invaluable collection of this gigantic library. It uses many methods to preserve printed matters, available in various formats.

321. *Fumigation:*

One of the methods of preserving the huge collection of publications and other reading materials from insect attack is to fumigate them with insecticides. In the beginning cupboards with perforated shelves were used to fumigate books with Para dichlorobenzene. Even big size trunks were used for fumigation. Pyrethrum extract was also used to control flying and crawling insects.

One Thymol fumigation chamber of about 98 cu. meters capacity was designed and acquired for fungus control. In this indigenously built vacuum fumigation chamber thousands of books can be disinfected in a single operation.



Indigenously built in the National Library the thymol vacuum fumigation chamber

322. Pesticide spray

To eradicate worms and insects that cause damage to library collections the Library started using pesticides with hand spray guns and machines. A large part of the land of the Belvedere area is a stronghold of white ants that quite often attack the publications and cause heavy damage. Therefore, constant vigil is kept on the growth of insects and their control.

323. Chemical treatment of reading materials

The Laboratory Division is like a hospital where the infected and damaged publications are treated with chemicals. The aim is to improve the condition of the material for further use by the readers. In doing so, the paper that absorbs a significant amount of acids from the atmosphere and turns yellow is de-acidified, mended and laminated. The leather binding of rare books and others are looked after with adequate treatment and are preserved.

324. Encapsulation

After the paper based reading materials are chemically treated, they are encapsulated with polyester/polypoplene film in a manner by which they are protected from all climatic hazards and secured to the extent of the life of the polyester cover.

The Laboratory Division, in addition to the above also carries out a lot of research on the application of different kinds of toxic substances and other chemicals with the only aim of preserving manuscripts of different kinds and varied materials and publications in the best possible manner.



Encapsulating documents

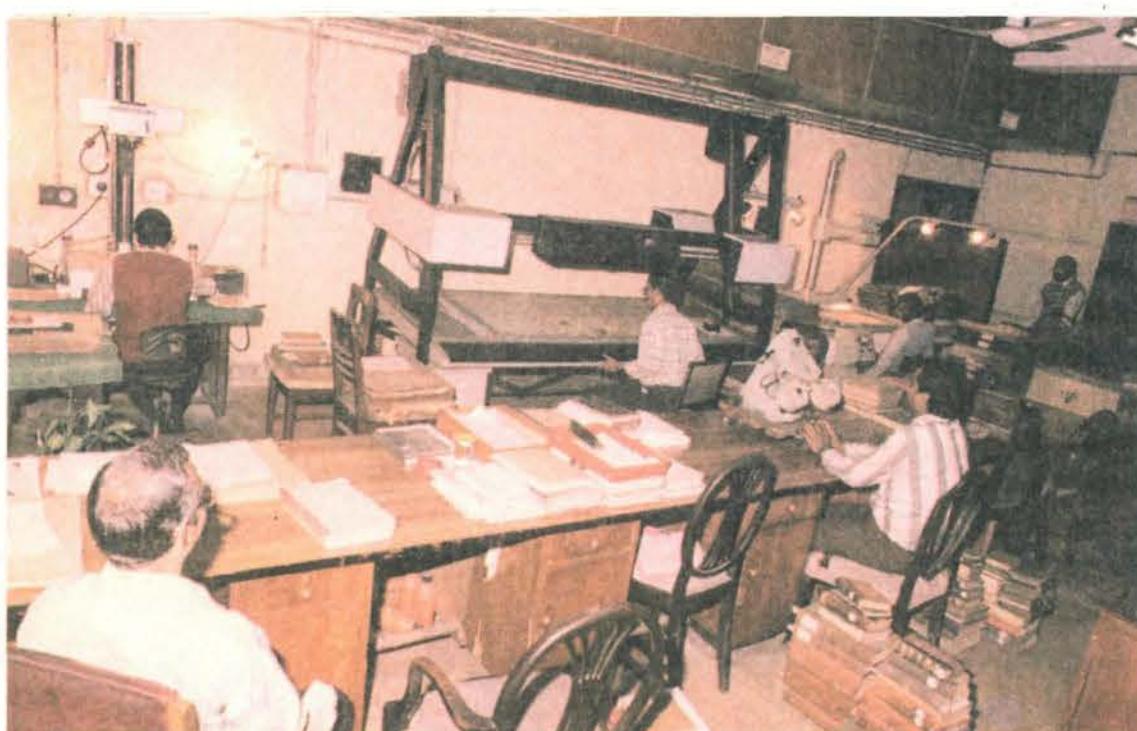
33. Microfilming:

Considering the colossal number of reading materials in the library and regular additions of more materials from several sources to its stock, it was realized that physical conservation of the entire collection alone would be a difficult task. Mending, laminating, binding and applying treatment are time-consuming process and for a library of this magnitude, it is a very difficult to cope up with the time and task. It has been felt that preservation through

another medium would be a feasible alternative solution to confront the said problem.

The Library recruited a microfilm photographer in 1969 with the purpose that all the important, rare and brittle publications as identified, would be microfilmed and preserved for posterity with one copy always made available for readers to use.

The Reprography Division came into being in 1970. It was developed with greater emphasis on the application of microphotography in the preservation programme of the Library, i.e. conservation of rare and valuable library materials including old files of newspapers. The Division had two planetary microfilm cameras, two semi automatic microfilm processors, one microfilm duplicator, two readers, one re-enlarger and many other items from the photographic laboratory including dark room accessories.



Microfilming cameras in operation in the Reprography Division

With the passage of time manual Xerox copiers and offset printer were added resulting in the extension of the activities of the division. The staff strength increased from one Microphotographer to two officers now, one Assistant Librarian, three Assistant Microphotographers, one Photo Assistant, two Laboratory Attendants and a Dusting Bearer.

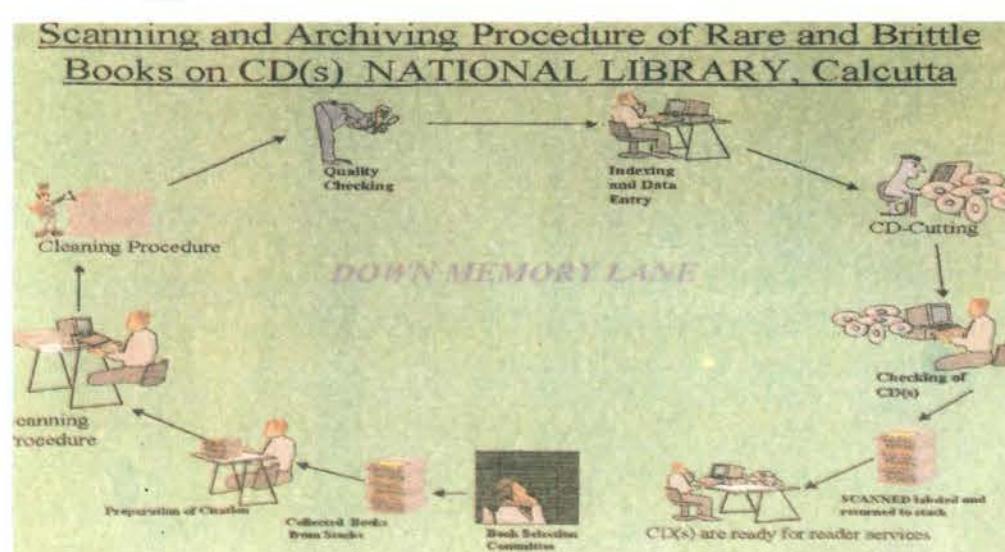
In order to maintain parity with international standards, the Library started microfilming files of national dailies, old and rare newspapers, rare books and documents of its stock. Today, apart from microfilming documents for records and preparing microfiches, the Library also extends reprographic services to readers and educational institutions.

Some of the important collections in microfilm consist of most of the old 19th century newspapers in the holdings of the National Library, Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit manuscripts, rare books, Modern Review, Calcutta Review, Census of India, Private papers of Tej Bahadur Sapru, B S Moonje papers and various Govt. administrative reports.

This unit also participated in trainings in conservation of library materials along with the Preservation Division.

5. Digitization

The latest technique that is applied to preserve the contents from the manuscripts and books is digitization. Like photo-reproduction, here also the image is captured through sophisticated scanners/cameras and all details are stored in digital format. This ensures not only the preservation of the document, but also provides multiple accesses to the document, like searching the contents through specific terms or words, by numbers, or illustrations as these are meta data that are created at the time of digitization. The Library undertook a pilot project entitled “Down Memory Lane” to digitize its rare and brittle books in late 90’s.



The English books that were published prior to 1990 and Indian books published before 1920 were taken into consideration. A local private agency was given the responsibility to scan and clean the documents. The library professionals were given the task of checking the scanned data to prepare citation cards for indexing in order to meet retrieval and reference need. From February 1999 to June 2001, a total of 6601 books containing more than 2.5 million pages were scanned and archived in 548 CD ROMs in duplicate. The computer division now renders readers' services from them. As part of its modernization of preservation activities, the Library has planned to take up several other schemes one of which is the digitization of manuscripts in the Rare Books Division.

Various psychological inhibitions regarding the digitization of books appear to be currently prevalent. Conventional readers are often skeptical about such changes, as they tend to look upon modernization as the domination of technology over cultural heritage. However, the new applications will solve problems of physical and chemical preservation to a great extent.

Though time may necessitate many more changes in the libraries, yet the printed publications will dominate in the libraries. The preservation & conservation work may undergo revolutionary changes, yet it remains to be seen how well we combat the problems and devote ourselves in preserving the library materials within the means available to us.

ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

Exhibitions:

The Sanskrit Language Division of the Library organized an exhibition of Sanskrit manuscripts in the Rare Books Division to mark the Sanskrit Day on 16th July 2002.

For enlightening readers with information on a neighbouring country Mauritius, the Library put up an exhibition of books on Mauritius between August 26 and September 1, 2002.

To commemorate Birth centenary of Umaprasad Mookerjee, a noted India Scholar and traveller, the Library put up a weeklong exhibition of his works and articles written on him from 15th November 2002.

In-service training and education:

As a regular manpower development program, the library professional staff underwent training on UNIMARC and application of VIRTUA software for three days under the guidance of Mr. Santa Kumar, System Manager, M/s VTLS Inc. The staff was mainly acquainted with various steps involved in acquisition, processing, charging and discharging of publications and made to practice independently and CDs were supplied to every trainee so that further practice could be done later in individual divisions. The trainings were held between October 7 and 10, 2002 and between November 20 and 22, 2002. The first training was imparted to 17 professional staff members whereas the later training increased the number and enrolled 19 staff members.

For the benefit of the library professionals of the NE states of India, the National Library, Kolkata organized a weeklong training program on 'Conservation of library materials' from November 11 to 15, 2002 in its campus at Belvedere. The trainees from Tripura, Mizoram and Nagaland were imparted both theoretical and practical, hands on training in the technique of preserving documents in libraries. While resource persons were invited from the Indian Museum, Asiatic Society and West Bengal State Archives to deliver lectures, the technical staff of the Library in Preservation and Laboratory Divisions imparted the practical training.

A group of twenty post-graduate students of the Department of Library and Information Science from Indira Gandhi National Open University came to the National Library on educational tour in November 2002. The said students were allowed on request, to attend part of the weeklong training program on Conservation of library materials as organized for the library professionals of the NE states of India.

A Hindi workshop was organized between November 25 and 26, 2002 for 20 library staff members in the Library premises. The aim of the workshop was to promote use of Hindi in day-to-day official work for those who cleared Praveen and Pragya examinations.

November 2002. During the visit they discussed several issues concerning curricula for training the library workers in the National Library. They visited several libraries and monasteries where rare manuscripts are preserved.



Visit to a monastery in Gangtok by officials of the National Library

Km Uma Majumdar, ALIO attended a workshop on “digitization of manuscripts” held between 17 and 18 December 2002 at Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library, Patna, Bihar. She made a CD presentation on digitization of documents in the workshop, as carried out in the National Library.

Collection building:

During the period of the coverage of the Newsletter the Library acquired a valuable personal collection of a renowned academician of the University of Calcutta Prof. Hara Prasad Chattopadhyay. Prof. Chattopadhyay donated 190 monographs of History in English and 15 in Bengali and 12 microfilms to this Library for their use by readers of History.

In addition the Library also received gifts of books from a number of individuals that are value additions to the Library collection.

During the workshop on Delivery of Books (Public Libraries) Act, 1954 and owing to interactions between the publishers and officials of the National

Library at different places, a large number of publications were deposited under the said Act.

Research assistance:

The Library extended reference and bibliographical assistance to following scholars who consulted the Library for their research work:

- 1 Dr. MOHD. AHSAN ULLAH of Bangladesh: University of Pune, Maharashtra. *Topic:* Present status and future needs of government public libraries in Bangladesh.
- 2 MONO MUKHOPADHYAY: Calcutta University. *Topic:* Bangla Sahitye kheladhula o sharir charcha.
- 3 SUSMITA BHATTACHARYA: Jadavpur University. *Topic:* Sociology of Bengali literature.
- 4 SHARADA AJIT: Bangalore University. *Topic:* The Indian literary biography.
- 5 J. SINDHU: Bangalore University. *Topic:* Travel writing in Central Asia.
- 6 ATTREYA BHATTA: Asiatic Society Research Fellow. *Topic:* Chinese literature.
- 7 PARTHA SARATHI NATH: Kalyani University. *Topic:* Banglar natya sahitya o samskriti.
- 8 LALU DAS: Jadavpur University. *Topic:* Change of climate and agriculture.
- 9 B CHAKRABARTI: Columbia University. *Topic:* Water resource management in West Bengal.
- 10 Dr. SUSMITA PODDAR: National Folklore Support Centre, Chennai: *Topic:* Sacred groves of Santals.
- 11 SUNIL KUMAR MISHRA: Allahabad University. *Topic:* Impact of India on Mathew Arnold.
- 12 CHANDRA ADITYA: Calcutta University. *Topic:* Effect of music on emotion.
- 13 MADHUMITA DAS: Jadavpur University. *Topic:* Guru Rabindra Nath Tagore.
- 14 SANMITA SEN: Jadavpur University. *Topic:* Bengal jamindars 1857-1947.
- 15 DEBASHIS BANDYOPADHYAY: CIEFL (Hyderabad). *Topic:* Raskin Bond: Search for identity and environment.

- 56 APARAJITA DHAR: University of Jadavpur, Kolkata. *Topic:* Advent of Gynaecology; Western medicine and women.
- 57 DITI RAY: University of Calcutta. *Topic:* Tattobodhini Patrika.
- 58 Prof. Hafiz Md. Tahir Ali, Kolkata. *Topic:* Life and works of Shaikh Mahibulla Ilahabadi.
- 59 KASTURI CHATTERJEE: University of Jadavpur, Kolkata. *Topic:* Bengal before and after partition; the profile of a province.
- 60 PRITHA LAHIRI: Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. *Topic:* Women's magazines in Bengal.
- 61 RITU MATHUR: University of Calcutta. *Topic:* Purna Swaraj; reflections in newspapers in Bengal.
- 62 SANHITA SEN: University of Jadavpur, Kolkata. *Topic:* Bengal zamindars: 1857-1947.
- 63 S S Mukherjee, Kidderpore College, Kolkata. *Topic:* Derozio.
- 64 SSAVITRI DAS SINHA: Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. *Topic:* Medical thought and practice in colonial India (1860-1947).

Miscellany:

The Tamilnadu Library Association and Ethiraj College for Women, Chennai jointly organized the LIBRIAN DAY on August 12, 2002 in the Ethiraj College for Women auditorium. On the said day tributes were paid to Dr S R Ranganathan, the father of Library Science in India, the celebration was attended by eminent personalities like Justice S Natarajan, Retd. Judge from Supreme Court, Shri Kavignar Erode Tamilanban, a noted Tamil poet, Dr. Manorama Srinath, professor of Library Science, University of Madras.

A seminar entitled ‘Technology and change management of libraries’, was jointly organized by IASLIC, Bombay Science Libraries Association and the British Council on September 24, 2002 at British Council auditorium, Noriman Point, Mumbai.

The ‘CSIR E-Journals Consortium Trainees’ training programme’ was organized by NBRI Library on 11-12 November 2002. Dr P Pushpangadan, Director, NBRI inaugurated the said training programme.

26th IASLIC Study Circle meeting was held on December 12, 2002 at IASLIC office at Kolkata. The topic of the meeting was ‘Information Bank for small-scale industries’. Shri Prabir Dey, Chief Executive Officer, FOSMI

delivered a lecture on the topic with emphasis on a joint collaboration project to develop an information databank for small-scale industries.

Shri Velu Latchumanan, an expert on palm leaf manuscript, is copying at the Government Museum, Chennai all the 1330 couplets of the Tirukkural, written by Thiruvalluvar about 2000 years ago on palm leaves. (Telegraph, 22 April 2003, p.6)

Dr Velaga Venkatappaiah – a versatile Telugu Librarian, administrator, research scholar, author, editor, compiler and examiner has devoted his life and rendered multifaceted services for the development of public library system in the country. His contribution in the standardization of library science terminology in Telugu received high appreciation. In 1966 the State Government of Andhra Pradesh accorded permission to the Andhra Pradesh Library Association to start a School of Library Science and it started a Certificate Course at Vijaywada. It was Dr Venkatappaiah who rose to the occasion and wrote books on Library Classification, Cataloguing and other subjects in Telugu language.

Dr. Venkatappaiah drafted the Model Public Libraries Act which has become a code document for drafting similar bills in other states of India. The said Act has provided a stable base for Library finance.

Visitors of the Library:

1. Dr. S Majumdar, Director, Central Secretariat Library, Department of Culture, New Delhi.
2. Dr. R K Singh, Librarian, Dr.RML Avadh University, Faizabad along with his students and lecturers.
3. Mr. C Paranthaman, Lecturer, Dr. Ambedkar Govt. College, Chennai.
4. Prof. Alaka Buragohain, Dept. of Lib. & Inf. Science, Guwahati University, Assam.
5. Swami Nageswarananda Saraswati, Bhramananda Ashraman, Buttelanka, East Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh.
6. Dr. Janakiballav Patnaik, Ex-Chief Minister, Orissa.
7. Dr. R Balakrishnan, Commissioner, Dept. of Tourism, Govt. of Orissa.
8. Ms Frances Tait, Regional Information Coordinator, South Asia, British Council, London.
9. Ms Sujata Sen, Director, British Council, Kolkata.

- 10.Ms Aruna Chaudhury, Director and MLA of Punjab Library Committee.
- 11.Ms. Carol VLMS Dawngkimi, Librarian, State Central Library, Mizoram.
- 12.Shri Shyamal Kanti Deb, Librarian, State Central Library, Agartala.
- 13.Prof. Andrew D. Roberts, SOAS, London, United Kingdom.
14. Ms Jamila BT Mohamed and Mr Isa Ahmad, National Library of Malayesia, Kuala Lumpur, Malayesia.
- 15.Prof. S Ahmed, Islamic History and Culture, University of Rajsahi, Bangladesh.
- 16.Dr. L Das Mahapatra, National Archives of India, Bhubaneswar, Orissa.
- 17.Sri M M Rajendran, His Excellency Governor of Orissa and the Acting Governor of West Bengal.
- 18.Mr Edvardo Serrano, Director of Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Relations, Govt. of Columbia.
- 19.Mr K Vanlalaura, Minister, Art and Culture, Govt. of Mizoram.
- 20.Mr Shyamalkanti Deb, Librarian, State Library, Aizawl, Mizoram.
- 21.Prof. Andrew D Roberts, SOAS, London, UK.
- 22.Ms Isabelle Nyfferejju, French Embassy, New Delhi.
- 23.Dr P S Venkateswaran, Professor of Surgery, Madras Medical College, Chennai.

Administration:

The Administration of the National Library reported the following about:

Retirement:

1. Shri Indradeo Singh, Library Clerk (General) took voluntary retirement on 30.06.2002(AN).
2. Shri Jiban Kr. Dutta, Library Clerk (General) took voluntary retirement on 31.07.2002.
3. Bhakta Singh Ghale, Guard retired from service from 31.12.2002.
4. Shri Anu Sekhar Majumdar, Lower Division Clerk resigned from service on 23.12.2002(FN).

Obituary:

1. Ram Lakhan Ram, Chowdhar expired on 17.09.2002.
2. Gulsher Nayak, Safaiwala expired on 13.10.2002

**LIST OF PRINTED PUBLICATIONS OF THE NATIONAL
LIBRARY, KOLKATA**

1. Author catalogue of printed books in Bengali language

Vol. 1	A-F	1997	Rs. 296.00
Vol. 2	G-I	1997	Rs. 328.00
Vol. 3	M-R	1959 (old edition)	Rs. 09.55
Vol. 3	M-R	1997	Rs. 475.00
Vol. 4	S-Z	1963 (old edition)	Rs. 4.70

2. Author catalogue of printed books in English language

Vol. 1	Supplement 1962-80	Rs. 507.00
Vol. 2	Supplement pt.1 1962-80	Rs. 1604.00

3. Author catalogue of printed books in European languages, 1941-64

Vol. 1	A-B	1941	Rs. 06.12
Vol. 2	C-E	1942	Rs. 06.00
Vol. 3	F-H	1942	Rs. 06.10
Vol. 4	----	---	-----
Vol. 5	M	1953	Rs. 12.12
Vol. 6	N-P	1954	Rs. 11.12
Vol. 7	Q-R	1956	Rs. 06.75
Vol. 8	S	1960	Rs. 06.25
Vol. 9	T-V	1963	Rs. 07.25
Vol. 10	W-Z	1964	Rs. 11.12

4. Author catalogue of printed books in European languages, Supplement, 1951-61

Vol. 1	A	1966	Rs. 16.50
Vol. 2	B	1973	Rs. 13.50
Vol. 3	C	1975	Rs. 12.00
Vol. 4	D-E	1977	Rs. 60.00
Vol. 5	F-G	1978	Rs. 35.00
Vol. 6	H-I	1980	Rs. 55.00
Vol. 7	J-L	1982	Rs. 56.00
Vol. 8	M	1982	Rs. 67.00
Vol. 9	N-R	1985	Rs. 233.00
Vol. 10	S	1985	Rs. 165.00
Vol. 11	T-Z	1989	Rs. 297.00



A view of the Remtek Monastery in Gangtok, Sikkim, Programme 'Infrastructural Development of libraries of North East'



Inauguration of Workshop on D B Act, at Bangalore



Exhibition of Sanskrit manuscripts in the Rare Books Division,
the National Library on the Sanskrit Day



Officials from the National Library and Central Reference Library at the Inauguration
of Workshop at Thanjavur, Chennai